

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

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**Remarks of President Barack Obama - As Prepared for Delivery  
Jakarta, Indonesia  
November 10, 2010**

Thank you for this wonderful welcome. Thank you to the people of Jakarta. And thank you to the people of Indonesia.

I am so glad that I made it to Indonesia, and that Michelle was able to join me. We had a couple of false starts this year, but I was determined to visit a country that has meant so much to me. Unfortunately, it's a fairly quick visit, but I look forward to coming back a year from now, when Indonesia hosts the East Asia Summit.

Before I go any further, I want to say that our thoughts and prayers are with all of those Indonesians affected by the recent tsunami and volcanic eruptions – particularly those who have lost loved ones, and those who have been displaced. As always, the United States stands with Indonesia in responding to this natural disaster, and we are pleased to be able to help as needed. As neighbors help neighbors and families take in the displaced, I know that the strength and resilience of the Indonesian people will pull you through once more.

Let me begin with a simple statement: Indonesia is a part of me. I first came to this country when my mother married an Indonesian man named Lolo Soetoro. As a young boy, I was coming to a different world. But the people of Indonesia quickly made me feel at home.

Jakarta looked very different in those days. The city was filled with buildings that were no more than a few stories tall. The Hotel Indonesia was one of the few high rises, and there was just one brand new shopping center called *Sarinah*. *Betchaks* outnumbered automobiles in those days, and the highway quickly gave way to unpaved roads and *kampongs*.

We moved to *Menteng Dalam*, where we lived in a small house with a mango tree out front. I learned to love Indonesia while flying kites, running along paddy fields, catching dragonflies, and buying *satay* and *baso* from the street vendors. Most of all, I remember the people – the old men and women who welcomed us with smiles; the children who made a foreigner feel like a neighbor; and the teachers who helped me learn about the wider world.

Because Indonesia is made up of thousands of islands, hundreds of languages, and people from scores of regions and ethnic groups, my times here helped me appreciate the common humanity of all people. And while my stepfather, like most Indonesians, was raised a Muslim, he firmly believed that all religions were worthy of respect. In this way, he reflected the spirit of religious tolerance that is enshrined in Indonesia's Constitution, and that remains one of this country's defining and inspiring characteristics.

I stayed here for four years – a time that helped shape my childhood; a time that saw the birth of my wonderful sister, Maya; and a time that made such an impression on my mother that she kept returning to Indonesia over the next twenty years to live, work and travel – pursuing her passion of promoting

opportunity in Indonesia's villages, particularly for women and girls. For her entire life, my mother held this place and its people close to her heart.

So much has changed in the four decades since I boarded a plane to move back to Hawaii. If you asked me – or any of my schoolmates who knew me back then – I don't think any of us could have anticipated that I would one day come back to Jakarta as President of the United States. And few could have anticipated the remarkable story of Indonesia over these last four decades.

The Jakarta that I once knew has grown to a teeming city of nearly ten million, with skyscrapers that dwarf the Hotel Indonesia, and thriving centers of culture and commerce. While my Indonesian friends and I used to run in fields with water buffalo and goats, a new generation of Indonesians is among the most wired in the world – connected through cell phones and social networks. And while Indonesia as a young nation focused inward, a growing Indonesia now plays a key role in the Asia Pacific and the global economy.

This change extends to politics. When my step-father was a boy, he watched his own father and older brother leave home to fight and die in the struggle for Indonesian independence. I'm happy to be here on Heroes Day to honor the memory of so many Indonesians who have sacrificed on behalf of this great country.

When I moved to Jakarta, it was 1967, a time that followed great suffering and conflict in parts of this country. Even though my step-father had served in the Army, the violence and killing during that time of political upheaval was largely unknown to me because it was unspoken by my Indonesian family and friends. In my household, like so many others across Indonesia, it was an invisible presence. Indonesians had their independence, but fear was not far away.

In the years since then, Indonesia has charted its own course through an extraordinary democratic transformation – from the rule of an iron fist to the rule of the people. In recent years, the world has watched with hope and admiration, as Indonesians embraced the peaceful transfer of power and the direct election of leaders. And just as your democracy is symbolized by your elected President and legislature, your democracy is sustained and fortified by its checks and balances: a dynamic civil society; political parties and unions; a vibrant media and engaged citizens who have ensured that – in Indonesia -- there will be no turning back.

But even as this land of my youth has changed in so many ways, those things that I learned to love about Indonesia – that spirit of tolerance that is written into your Constitution; symbolized in your mosques and churches and temples; and embodied in your people – still lives on. *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* – unity in diversity. This is the foundation of Indonesia's example to the world, and this is why Indonesia will play such an important role in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

So today, I return to Indonesia as a friend, but also as a President who seeks a deep and enduring partnership between our two countries. Because as vast and diverse countries; as neighbors on either side of the Pacific; and above all as democracies – the United States and Indonesia are bound together by shared interests and shared values.

Yesterday, President Yudhoyono and I announced a new, Comprehensive Partnership between the United States and Indonesia. We are increasing ties between our governments in many different areas, and – just as importantly – we are increasing ties among our people. This is a partnership of equals, grounded in mutual interests and mutual respect.

With the rest of my time today, I'd like to talk about why the story I just told – the story of Indonesia since the days when I lived here – is so important to the United States, and to the world. I will focus on three areas that are closely related, and fundamental to human progress – development, democracy, and religion.

First, the friendship between the United States and Indonesia can advance our mutual interest in development.

When I moved to Indonesia, it would have been hard to imagine a future in which the prosperity of families in Chicago and Jakarta would be connected. But our economies are now global, and Indonesians have experienced both the promise and perils of globalization: from the shock of the Asian financial crisis in the 1990s to the millions lifted out of poverty. What that means – and what we learned in the recent economic crisis – is that we have a stake in each other's success.

America has a stake in an Indonesia that is growing, with prosperity that is broadly shared among the Indonesian people – because a rising middle class here means new markets for our goods, just as America is a market for yours. And so we are investing more in Indonesia, our exports have grown by nearly 50 percent, and we are opening doors for Americans and Indonesians to do business with one another.

America has a stake in an Indonesia that plays its rightful role in shaping the global economy. Gone are the days when seven or eight countries could come together to determine the direction of global markets. That is why the G-20 is now the center of international economic cooperation, so that emerging economies like Indonesia have a greater voice and bear greater responsibility. And through its leadership of the G-20's anti-corruption group, Indonesia should lead on the world stage and by example in embracing transparency and accountability.

America has a stake in an Indonesia that pursues sustainable development, because the way we grow will determine the quality of our lives and the health of our planet. That is why we are developing clean energy technologies that can power industry and preserve Indonesia's precious natural resources – and America welcomes your country's strong leadership in the global effort to combat climate change.

Above all, America has a stake in the success of the Indonesian people. Underneath the headlines of the day, we must build bridges between our peoples, because our future security and prosperity is shared. That is exactly what we are doing – by increased collaboration among our scientists and researchers, and by working together to foster entrepreneurship. And I am especially pleased that we have committed to double the number of American and Indonesian students studying in our respective countries – we want more Indonesian students in our schools, and more American students to come study in this country, so that we can forge new ties that last well into this young century.

These are the issues that really matter in our daily lives. Development, after all, is not simply about growth rates and numbers on a balance sheet. It's about whether a child can learn the skills they need to make it in a changing world. It's about whether a good idea is allowed to grow into a business, and not be suffocated by corruption. It's about whether those forces that have transformed the Jakarta that I once knew – technology and trade and the flow of people and goods – translate into a better life for human beings, a life marked by dignity and opportunity.

This kind of development is inseparable from the role of democracy.

Today, we sometimes hear that democracy stands in the way of economic progress. This is not a new argument. Particularly in times of change and economic uncertainty, some will say that it is easier to take a shortcut to development by trading away the rights of human beings for the power of the state. But that is not what I saw on my trip to India, and that is not what I see in Indonesia. Your achievements demonstrate that democracy and development reinforce one another.

Like any democracy, you have known setbacks along the way. America is no different. Our own Constitution spoke of the effort to forge a “more perfect union,” and that is a journey we have travelled ever since, enduring Civil War and struggles to extend rights to all of our citizens. But it is precisely this effort that has allowed us to become stronger and more prosperous, while also becoming a more just and free society.

Like other countries that emerged from colonial rule in the last century, Indonesia struggled and sacrificed for the right to determine your destiny. That is what Heroes Day is all about – an Indonesia that belongs to Indonesians. But you also ultimately decided that freedom cannot mean replacing the strong hand of a colonizer with a strongman of your own.

Of course, democracy is messy. Not everyone likes the results of every election. You go through ups and downs. But the journey is worthwhile, and it goes beyond casting a ballot. It takes strong institutions to check the concentration of power. It takes open markets that allow individuals to thrive. It takes a free press and an independent justice system to root out abuse and excess, and to insist upon accountability. It takes open society and active citizens to reject inequality and injustice.

These are the forces that will propel Indonesia forward. And it will require a refusal to tolerate the corruption that stands in the way of opportunity; a commitment to transparency that gives every Indonesian a stake in their government; and a belief that the freedom that Indonesians have fought for is what holds this great nation together.

That is the message of the Indonesians who have advanced this democratic story – from those who fought in the Battle of Surabaya 55 years ago today; to the students who marched peacefully for democracy in the 1990s, to leaders who have embraced the peaceful transition of power in this young century. Because ultimately, it will be the rights of citizens that will stitch together this remarkable *Nusantara* that stretches from Sabang to Merauke – an insistence that every child born in this country should be treated equally, whether they come from Java or Aceh; Bali or Papua.

That effort extends to the example that Indonesia sets abroad. Indonesia took the initiative to establish the Bali Democracy Forum, an open forum for countries to share their experiences and best practices in fostering democracy. Indonesia has also been at the forefront of pushing for more attention to human rights within ASEAN. The nations of Southeast Asia must have the right to determine their own destiny, and the United States will strongly support that right. But the *people* of Southeast Asia must have the right to determine their own destiny as well. That is why we condemned elections in Burma that were neither free nor fair. That is why we are supporting your vibrant civil society in working with counterparts across this region. Because there is no reason why respect for human rights should stop at the border of any country.

Hand in hand, that is what development and democracy are about – the notion that certain values are universal. Prosperity without freedom is just another form of poverty. Because there are aspirations that human beings share – the liberty of knowing that your leader is accountable to you, and that you won’t be locked up for disagreeing with them; the opportunity to get an education and to work with dignity; the freedom to practice your faith without fear or restriction.

Religion is the final topic that I want to address today, and – like democracy and development – it is fundamental to the Indonesian story.

Like the other Asian nations that I am visiting on this trip, Indonesia is steeped in spirituality – a place where people worship God in many different ways. Along with this rich diversity, it is also home to the world's largest Muslim population – a truth that I came to know as a boy when I heard the call to prayer across Jakarta.

Just as individuals are not defined solely by their faith, Indonesia is defined by more than its Muslim population. But we also know that relations between the United States and Muslim communities have frayed over many years. As President, I have made it a priority to begin to repair these relations. As a part of that effort, I went to Cairo last June, and called for a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world – one that creates a path for us to move beyond our differences.

I said then, and I will repeat now, that no single speech can eradicate years of mistrust. But I believed then, and I believe today, that we have a choice. We can choose to be defined by our differences, and give in to a future of suspicion and mistrust. Or we can choose to do the hard work of forging common ground, and commit ourselves to the steady pursuit of progress. And I can promise you – no matter what setbacks may come, the United States is committed to human progress. That is who we are. That is what we have done. That is what we will do.

We know well the issues that have caused tensions for many years – issues that I addressed in Cairo. In the 17 months that have passed we have made some progress, but much more work remains to be done.

Innocent civilians in America, Indonesia, and across the world are still targeted by violent extremists. I have made it clear that America is not, and never will be, at war with Islam. Instead, all of us must defeat al Qaeda and its affiliates, who have no claim to be leaders of any religion – certainly not a great, world religion like Islam. But those who want to build must not cede ground to terrorists who seek to destroy. This is not a task for America alone. Indeed, here in Indonesia, you have made progress in rooting out terrorists and combating violent extremism.

In Afghanistan, we continue to work with a coalition of nations to build the capacity of the Afghan government to secure its future. Our shared interest is in building peace in a war-torn land – a peace that provides no safe-haven for violent extremists, and that provides hope for the Afghan people.

Meanwhile, we have made progress on one of our core commitments - our effort to end the war in Iraq. 100,000 American troops have left Iraq. Iraqis have taken full responsibility for their security. And we will continue to support Iraq as it forms an inclusive government and we bring all of our troops home.

In the Middle East, we have faced false starts and setbacks, but we have been persistent in our pursuit of peace. Israelis and Palestinians restarted direct talks, but enormous obstacles remain. There should be no illusions that peace and security will come easy. But let there be no doubt: we will spare no effort in working for the outcome that is just, and that is in the interest of all the parties involved: two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

The stakes are high in resolving these issues, and the others I have spoken about today. For our world has grown smaller and while those forces that connect us have unleashed opportunity, they also empower those who seek to derail progress. One bomb in a marketplace can obliterate the bustle of daily commerce. One whispered rumor can obscure the truth, and set off violence between communities that

once lived in peace. In an age of rapid change and colliding cultures, what we share as human beings can be lost.

But I believe that the history of both America and Indonesia gives us hope. It's a story written into our national mottos. *E pluribus unum* – out of many, one. *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* – unity in diversity. We are two nations, which have travelled different paths. Yet our nations show that hundreds of millions who hold different beliefs can be united in freedom under one flag. And we are now building on that shared humanity – through the young people who will study in each other's schools; through the entrepreneurs forging ties that can lead to prosperity; and through our embrace of fundamental democratic values and human aspirations..

Earlier today, I visited the *Istiqlal* mosque – a place of worship that was still under construction when I lived in Jakarta. I admired its soaring minaret, imposing dome, and welcoming space. But its name and history also speak to what makes Indonesia great. *Istiqlal* means independence, and its construction was in part a testament to the nation's struggle for freedom. Moreover, this house of worship for many thousands of Muslims was designed by a Christian architect.

Such is Indonesia's spirit. Such is the message of Indonesia's inclusive philosophy, *Pancasila*. Across an archipelago that contains some of God's most beautiful creations, islands rising above an ocean named for peace, people choose to worship God as they please. Islam flourishes, but so do other faiths. Development is strengthened by an emerging democracy. Ancient traditions endure, even as a rising power is on the move.

That is not to say that Indonesia is without imperfections. No country is. But here can be found the ability to bridge divides of race and region and religion – that ability to see yourself in all individuals. As a child of a different race coming from a distant country, I found this spirit in the greeting that I received upon moving here: *Selamat Datang*. As a Christian visiting a mosque on this visit, I found it in the words of a leader who was asked about my visit and said, "Muslims are also allowed in churches. We are all God's followers."

That spark of the divine lies within each of us. We cannot give in to doubt or cynicism or despair. The stories of Indonesia and America tell us that history is on the side of human progress; that unity is more powerful than division; and that the people of this world can live together in peace. May our two nations work together, with faith and determination, to share these truths with all mankind.